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POLAND: Protests Over Food Shortages

Consumer dissatisfaction has risen sharply in Poland in the last several days, and demonstrations reportedly are being planned in protest over worsening food shortages. Marches are expected in central Poland--one in Kutno today and others early next week in Lodz. Although no effective date was given, the government on Thursday published a list of new prices, which will include a more than tripling of the prices of butter, bread, sugar, and milk and a more than doubling of flour and ham prices. The government also announced a 20-percent cut in meat rations for August.

Government actions concerning meat rations and price increases may lead to confrontation with Solidarity, which has opposed any cuts in meat rations. Solidarity chief Walesa has indicated that, although necessary, price increases should be deferred until after economic reforms are enacted. The government consequently faces a dilemma both because of the exhaustion of meat reserves by the end of this month and because of a rapidly depleting reserve of hard currency. [REDACTED]

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